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the gold radical in his name or someone with plenty of the gold element in his horoscope will be asked to be surety. Or butchers, priests, scholars and military men are invited if the elements show a weakness in those directions.

In cases where the marriage date has proved unlucky 年月不吉 *nien-yüeh pu chi*, the whole process of finding a lucky day and holding the marriage ceremony is gone through again, that sons may be born.

When the unfitness is in the girl's horoscope, making the union unlucky, friends set to work to prove that her nativity characters 八字 *pa tzŭ* have been incorrect from birth, 婚頭錯了 *hun t'ou ts'o-liao;* a change is made and the marriage ceremony is gone through a second time.

A barren woman goes to the temple of the goddess of Mercy, *sung tzŭ Kuan-Yin* 送子觀音, who always has plenty of children around her. She pulls out some of her own hair, and ties it round the arm or neck of a child-idol 拴童子 shuan t'ung-tsu. When she leaves she calls the spirit of this idol to follow her home. Sometimes she goes to the priest and gives him her special reasons for desiring a son, and she receives from him a *tan* 單, which document is then burnt as an offering to the idol.

Sometimes arrangements are made with a family that has plenty of children to buy from it a new-born babe, a few hundreds of taels being perhaps paid for a healthy male child. As soon as born it is carried in the night to its new mother, who goes through a feigned confinement 假裝坐月 *chia chuang tso yüeh*. The child is reared on sugar and water and other concoctions.

Families sometimes obtain a son in exchange for a girl and a liberal sum in hard cash. In such cases it is always an insult to speak of the boy as adopted.

Besides the above efforts made by the family itself to procure sons, the friends of the family may do a great deal by special presents. Thus, a melon may be placed in a chair and escorted with music, red umbrella and much ceremony to the house of the childless people. There it is put on the family altar. If a child is born later a feast must be provided for those who gave the melon, or there will be bad feeling.